



## UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20425

OFFICE OF STAFF DIRECTOR

Q. 1

February 21, 2006

**SENT VIA FACSIMILE AND U.S. MAIL**

The Honorable John F. Kerry  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-6350

Dear Senator Kerry:

Thank you for your letter of January 27, 2006. As the Commission reforms and strengthens its procurement procedures and practices, we are grateful that you have reminded us of the contracting opportunities available with service-disabled veteran-owned small business. The Commission is eager to seek out and honor those who have made such great sacrifices for the Nation. However, we remind the Committee that our procurement needs are modest and specific. Accordingly, contracting opportunities available at this agency are quite limited.

The following responds to the supplemental questions contained in your letter of January 27, 2006 addressed to Chairman Gerald A. Reynolds. The Chairman has asked me to respond on his behalf. Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions.

*1. Has the Commission on Civil Rights set aside any contracts for service-disabled veteran-owned small business owners and limited competition for these businesses since the passage of this legislation? Has the Commission on Civil Rights utilized the sole-source tool that was made available by P.L. 108-183, and, if so, how often?*

As you are aware, the Commission is a small agency with a total budget authority of approximately \$9 million, with approximately \$6 million going towards salaries and benefits. As such, our procurement needs are relatively modest compared to other federal agencies, and are often quite specific. For example, the Commission anticipates spending approximately \$1.3 million in rental payments to the General Services Administration (GSA) for the headquarters offices, \$260,000 for accounting services provided by GSA, \$240,000 for auditing services, \$200,000 for LEXIS/Nexis, \$180,000 for the agency's communication services, \$74,000 for transcription services, \$64,000 for the Government Printing Office to warehouse our publications, and \$36,000 in staff training in FY 2006. Assuming these aforementioned expenditures, the remainder would stand at approximately \$560,000. As you can see, our opportunities for utilizing the sole source tool or restricted competition for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses are diminished.

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*2. What strategies are being implemented to inform agency contractors about the opportunities available to them through this program? What steps has the agency taken to actively seek out eligible businesses and inform them of the contracting opportunities at the Commission on Civil Rights under the Veterans Benefits Act?*

The Commission strives to make the public aware of contracting opportunities with the agency consistent with our limited funds for outreach and advertising to potential contractors. The Commission's public website provides contact information for those seeking acquisition opportunities at <http://www.usccr.gov/contact/contndx.htm>. The Commission is also preparing to expand its micropurchase card program to Directors of the agency's Regional Offices. The agency will ensure that Regional Directors are aware of contracting opportunities with small, small disadvantaged, women-owned, veteran-owned, HUBZone, and service-disabled veteran-owned small business concerns in conjunction with this expansion. Once Commission and Regional staff are aware of contracting opportunities with these business concerns, it will be easy for them to direct potential contractors in these groups to the appropriate agency contracting officers, given the small size of the agency and the centralization of contracting authority in the agency's Administrative Services and Clearinghouse Division (ASCD).

*3. Is there a process for service-disabled veteran-owned small business to proactively contact contracting officers or the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization to learn about contracts for which they are eligible under this program?*

The Commission's public website provides contact information for those seeking acquisition opportunities at <http://www.usccr.gov/contact/contndx.htm>. This link directs potential contractors to contact the Administrative Services and Clearinghouse Division (ACSD), whose chief is delegated contracting authority and is a warranted Contracting Officer. Below the contact information is a link to a page, <http://www.usccr.gov/acquistn/acq.htm>, on which the Commission posts requests for quotations. Additionally, the Commission issues requests for proposals in the *Federal Business Opportunities*.

*4. What training programs has the Commission on Civil Rights implemented to ensure that the Agency's procurement staff is fully aware of the various tools available to them to assist in the utilization of service-disabled veteran-owned business?*

The Commission is currently developing in-house training on the agency's recently issued Procurement and Acquisition Guide. This Guide explicitly identifies sole source awards under the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 under 15 U.S.C. § 657f as well as other statutorily authorized exceptions to full competition.

Very truly yours,



KENNETH L. MARCUS  
Staff Director